

**Abstract**

An architecture for a multimedia peer-to-peer home network allows the automated definition of peer groups, or zones, by using group labels, where each peer is capable of automatically identifying whether other peers are members of the same group, or of another group, and where each peer may freely cooperate with other peers of the same group, e.g. exchange information or share resources like storage capacity. Using this architecture, it is e.g. possible that a user who is accessing a node within a peer group has also access to any other node of the peer group, without being requested for authentication. Another characteristic is that other peer groups can be defined which have access rights to network resources and services. Advantageously, the invention simplifies network creation and operation by not requiring the user to have special networking knowledge.

20 Fig.1